

REMARKS

Applicants have amended their claims in order to further clarify the definition of various aspects of the present invention, consistent with the description in Applicants' specification. In particular, Applicants have amended claims 1 and 3 to recite that the "first" plates are abutted together, and have further amended claims 1 and 3 to recite that the third plates (edge members) of the first and second panels are spaced from each other when the first plates are abutted together. Claims 1 and 3 have been still further amended to recite a step of providing an additional plate member extending between the third plates of the first and second panels, such that an abutted portion is formed between the additional plate member and the second plates of the first and second panels, overlying the third plates (edge members).

Claim 4 has been amended to recite that in abutting the first and second panels, the third plates of the first and second panels are spaced from each other when the first and second panels are abutted; and to recite the additional step of providing an additional plate member extending between the third plates of the first and second panels, such that an abutted portion is formed between the additional plate member and the second plates of the first and second panels, overlying the third plates. Claim 4 has been further amended to delete recitation that in abutting the first and second panels, an abutted portion is provided therebetween; and to delete recitation that the first plates, the second plates, and the third plates are abutted at the abutted portion.

Claim 5 has been amended to recite plate thicknesses of the first and second "plates," and to recite that a welding depth of a side of the first plates, made by the friction stir welding, is "smaller" than a plate thickness of the first plates.

Independent claim 6 has been amended to recite that in the structure body, edge members of the first and second panels are spaced from each other; to recite

an additional plate member extending between the edge members of the first and second panels and forming an abutted portion with the second plates of the first and second panels, overlying the edge members of the first and second panels; and to recite that the abutted portion has a friction stir welding. Claim 6 has been further amended to delete recitation that in abutting the first and second panels to each other, an abutted portion is formed therebetween; to delete recitation that the abutted portion of the first and second panels have a friction stir welding; and to delete that the first plates, the second plates and the third plates are abutted.

Moreover, Applicants are amending each of claims 1, 3, 4 and 6 to delete recitation that the third plate (edge member) is substantially orthogonal to the first plate.

In addition, Applicants are adding new claims 7 and 8 to the application. Claims 7 and 8, dependent respectively on claims 6 and 7, respectively recites that the edge member connects a midway of one end side of the first plate to the second plate; and recites that the edge member connects the midway of the one end side of the first plate to an end side of the second plate.

In connection with amendments to previously considered claims, and in connection with the newly added claims, note, for example, Figs. 9(A) – (D) of Applicants' original disclosure, particularly together with the description in connection therewith on pages 10-12 of Applicants' specification. Noting the rejection of previously considered claims under the first paragraph of 35 USC §112, as set forth on pages 2 and 3 of the Office Action mailed March 23, 2005, more detailed comments with respect to a description, for the present claims, in the original disclosure of the above-identified application, is set forth infra.

The rejection of claim 3 under the second paragraph of 35 USC §112, set forth on pages 3 and 4 of the Office Action mailed March 23, 2005, is respectfully

traversed, insofar as applicable to the claims as presently amended. Thus, claim 3 now recites that the “first” plates are abutted together. Clearly, the first plates have antecedent basis in presently amended claim 3, with this claim 3 reciting that each of the first and second panels comprises “a first plate,” among other structure. In view of present amendments to claim 3, it is respectfully submitted that the rejection thereof under the second paragraph of 35 USC §112, is moot.

Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection of their claims under the first paragraph of USC §112, set forth on pages 2 and 3 of the Office Action mailed March 23, 2005, especially insofar as this rejection is applicable to the claims as presently amended.

Thus, the Examiner contends that there is no description in the original disclosure for the third member/plate, as in previously considered claims. However, the Examiner’s attention is respectfully directed to Figs. 9 (A) – (D), the description in connection therewith on pages 10-12 of Applicants’ specification and the following discussion. As seen in Fig. 9(A), and to be illustrative and not limiting, plates 36 are shown, with upper plates 33 and lower plates 34 being connected to each other through the plates 36. Moreover, Fig. 9(B) shows joint 60, e.g., mounted between the two hollow shaped members 31, 32. As can be seen in Figs. 9(C) and 9(D), weld beads (e.g., weld beads 45) are provided at abutting portions, overlying the third plates (e.g., the plate represented by reference character 36) where a friction stir welding is provided. Moreover, as seen, for example, in Figs. 9(C) and 9(D), a welding depth of the friction stir welding (at, e.g., second plates 33) is larger than a plate thickness of these second plates. As seen, for example, in comparing Figs. 9(B) and 9(C), and as further seen in the paragraph bridging pages 10 and 11 of Applicants’ specification, a welding depth at a side of the first plates (e.g., plates 34, 34) is smaller than a plate thickness of the first plates.

In addition, noting claims 7 and 8, attention is respectfully directed to plate 36 in Fig. 9(A), connecting plates 33 and 34 of the respective panels 31 and 32. As can be seen, plate 36 connects, e.g., a midway of plate 34 to an end of plate 33.

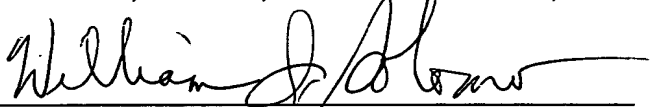
In view of the forgoing, it is respectfully submitted that there is clear support, within the requirements of the description requirement of 35 USC 112, first paragraph, for the presently claimed subject matter. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection under the first paragraph of 35 USC §112 is respectfully requested.

In view of all of the foregoing, reconsideration and allowance of the claims remaining in the application are respectfully requested.

Applicants request any shortage of fees in connection with the filing of this paper be charged to the Deposit Account of Antonelli, Terry, Stout & Kraus, LLP, Deposit Account No. 01-2135 (case 503.35255VX9), and any excess fees be credited to such Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

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